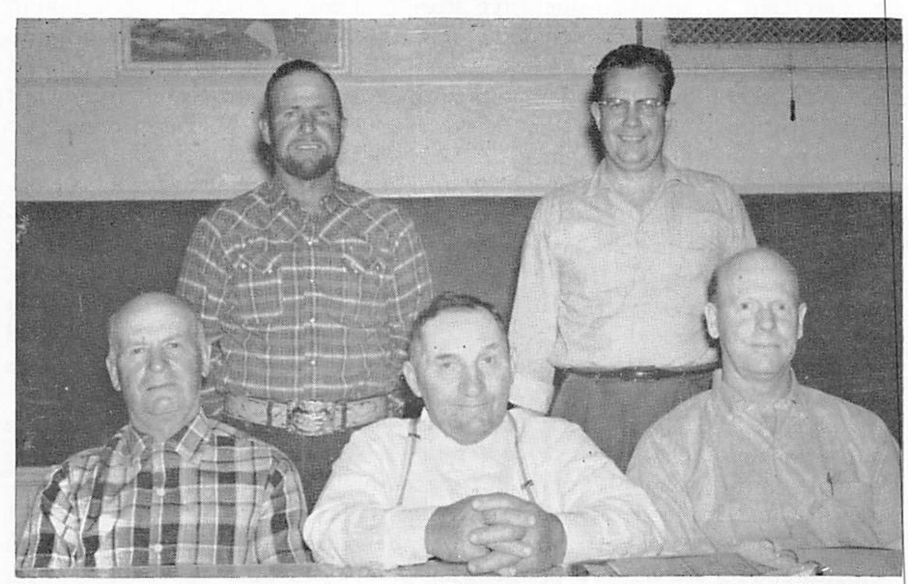
One of the stalwart leaders in Charleston's civic growth has been



James Ritchie, president of the Charleston Town Board from 1909 to 1958.

James Ritchie, who became president of the town board on July 20, 1909, and has been serving continuously since that time. Many Charleston residents have served on the board with him. Present members include Dan Wright, Warren Farnsworth, Joseph Thacker and Duke Johnson.



The Charleston Town Board during the Wasatch County Centennial of 1959. Seated, left to right, Reed Edwards, H. Fred Price and L. Warren Farnsworth, president. Standing in the rear are Duke Johnson and Calvin Edwards.

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the Black Hawk War broke out, settlers all over the valley banded together in Heber City for protection. Those in Charleston left their homes to seek the protection of a more populated area. Only the cattle were left behind, and many choice animals were shot or stolen by raiding Indian parties.

Late in 1867 the Indian difficulties subsided and some Charleston residents began moving back to claim their lands. Some new settlers also chose Charleston as their home, and by 1870 there were 15 families in the community.

Shortly after the city was resettled, steps were taken to secure a townsite on which a more compact community could be built. In 1873, twenty city blocks, each 26 rods square with four lots in a block were surveyed. The streets were surveyed to be six rods wide.

Indicative of the growth in Charleston is this newspaper report published in the Deseret News of May 2, 1873:

"Nymphas C. Murdock of Charleston, which is twenty-two miles from Provo and five miles from Heber City, called yesterday afternoon. He states that Charleston consists of about twenty-four families and that there is considerable farming land there still open to pre-emptors. A new brick meeting house is in the process of construction, and will shortly be completed. A small co-operative store is doing a good business, taking the produce of the people for goods and re-exchanging the produce again in other markets. Brother Murdock has charge of the store. There is no Post Office at Charleston yet, although it is on a direct mail route, but an application will soon be made by the people to the Department for that very essential convenience."

Charleston continued its civic growth as an unincorporated community for more than 20 years, and was ready for incorporation by December of 1899. The articles of incorporation were drawn up on December 30, 1899, with John M. Ritchie as president and William Daybell, G. W. Daybell, H. J. Wagstaff and George T. Baker as trustees. The first meeting of the board of the newly incorporated community was held January 10, 1900. Lucy A. Jacobs was named clerk with L. E. Barrows as town marshal.

During 1905 the community cooperated with Heber City and the county in building an electric power plant. A heavy debt was carried by the community for many years, but the plant became a successful venture and operated for several years. Joining again with the county in 1931 and 1932, Charleston officials bonded the community for $100,000 and helped rebuild the power plant. The plant was able to compete with commercial power prices and still pay good dividends to supplement community funds. With funds from the power plant, all streets in the